



Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

*Provisional***4049th** Meeting

Wednesday, 29 September 1999, 3.15 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Kok	(Netherlands)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Bualay
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Essonghé
	Gambia	Mr. Jobe
	Malaysia	Mr. Mohammad Kamal
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hain
	United States of America	Mr. Minton

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1999/1008)



The meeting was suspended at 1.20 p.m. and resumed at 3.30 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Nigeria, Pakistan and Uganda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gambari (Nigeria); Mr. Haque (Pakistan) and Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): In his report on the work of the Organization to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, the Secretary-General had this to say on Africa:

"An estimated 44 per cent of Africans, and 51 per cent of those in sub-Saharan Africa, are living in absolute poverty. Of the 30 million people infected by HIV/AIDS in the world, 23 million live in sub-Saharan Africa; 91 per cent of all AIDS deaths in the world have occurred in 34 countries — 29 of which are in Africa." (*A/54/I, para. 172*)

There are over 6 million refugees and about 8 million internally displaced persons in Africa. Twenty countries are either engaged in or affected by conflict. And the list goes on.

I have chosen to commence my statement with this extract for two reasons. One is to highlight the incompatibility of conflict with durable peace and sustainable development. The other reason is to stress that the Netherlands remains an important donor country and development partner to Africa and particularly to my country, Namibia. It is therefore no surprise to us, Sir, that your delegation has initiated yet another important debate, this time on the progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Your physical presence in presiding over this meeting, Sir, is no small measure of your interest. My

delegation thanks the Secretary-General for the progress report which is guiding our discussions and for his tireless efforts in addressing conflict situations in Africa and mobilizing international support for the development of Africa.

It is now 17 months since the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General was issued. Notwithstanding the recommendations contained therein, conflict in many parts of Africa — based on ethnicity, religion or the pursuit of diamonds, drugs, timber concessions and other valuable commodities — continues to plague Africa. Rebel groups and their supporters are creating turmoil on our beloved continent. The security and neutrality of refugee camps are not respected, while the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons is becoming unmanageable. The traffic in women and girls as sex slaves and the recruitment and training of children as combatants are rampant.

Today, massive resources continue to be diverted to the procuring of arms and munitions. Furthermore, and according to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the cost to the international community of major wars in the 1990s, excluding Kosovo, amounted to \$199 billion. We also know that Africa received less than \$5 billion in foreign direct investment in 1998. If half of the resources lost to wars were channelled into development programmes, then surely millions of children, women and men who today are victims of armed conflict would be saved and Africa's development and prosperity would have been enhanced.

Thus, we concur with the Secretary-General's views that

"Taking prevention more seriously will help to ensure that there are fewer wars and less consequential disasters to cope with in the first place." (*ibid.*, para. 21)

It is for this reason that we commend the initiatives of the United Nations for its support to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament and the peacekeeping training centres in Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, as well as regional and subregional initiatives in the areas of conflict prevention through the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network, which serves as an early-warning mechanism in Central and Southern Africa.

To this end, we commend the United Nations post-conflict peace-building effort in countries emerging from

civil wars and its assistance in the destruction of small arms and light weapons trafficked in violation of Security Council-imposed sanctions.

Furthermore, as the Secretary-General correctly points out in his progress report, rivalry in mediation efforts is detrimental to peace and frustrating to United Nations peacekeeping efforts, and therefore new initiatives must augment the existing mediation efforts. In this context, we reiterate our appeal to the international community to continue and to increase assistance to the Organization of African Unity and other regional organizations in Africa.

The Security Council has issued numerous resolutions imposing sanctions against UNITA. In addition, the Security Council adopted resolution 1237 (1999) on 7 May 1999, establishing the expert panels with the mandate to study the violations of sanctions against UNITA. Namibia remains committed to the full implementation of sanctions against UNITA and pledges its full support to the work of the panels and eagerly awaits their recommendations in this regard. UNITA must not be permitted to continue defying the will of the international community with impunity. UNITA must comply with its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol by demilitarizing its forces and must permit the extension of State administration to areas under its control.

With regard to the further tightening of sanctions against UNITA through the adoption of national legislation criminalizing violations of the Council's sanctions imposed against UNITA, my Government supports this measure and will approach the Secretariat for assistance in preparing its own national legislation in this regard. We share the view that the Security Council has exercised and continues to exercise a double standard in the application of sanctions, which has indeed undermined the effectiveness of sanctions imposed against UNITA. The political will of the international community is of utmost importance in rendering the sanctions more effective. We highly commend the efforts and commitment of Ambassador Robert Fowler of Canada, the Chairman of the sanctions Committee, in galvanizing momentum among the international community to implement sanctions against UNITA.

Since the outbreak of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo more than a year ago, enormous efforts have been made by regional leaders, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations to resolve the conflict. As a result of those efforts and the determination of African leaders to address conflicts afflicting the continent, the Ceasefire Agreement

was signed on 10 July 1999 by the States involved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict and subsequently by the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo and the Congolese Rally for Democracy on 1 and 31 August 1999, respectively.

That war has caused immense human suffering to hundreds of innocent civilians, some of whom have lost their lives. Others are now internally displaced or have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The humanitarian needs of these refugees and internally displaced persons need to be addressed, for it will take time before they return to their homes.

Security Council resolution 1234 (1999) of 9 April 1999 called for the immediate signing of the Ceasefire Agreement, among other things. Now that the Agreement has been signed by all parties, we regard it of utmost importance for a United Nations peacekeeping operation to be deployed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo without further delay, in order to implement the Agreement. Such an international peacekeeping force, of the right size, should be deployed with an appropriate mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and should be supported with the necessary resources.

We have always maintained that the Council should act swiftly so as to avoid creating a vacuum. It is now time for the international community, in particular the Security Council, to take immediate action. What we had feared is now taking place in the Congo. Resolution 1234 (1999) is being flouted in earnest in the eastern part of the Congo, not to mention the continuous looting of the natural resources of the Congo.

The pace for the deployment of the military liaison personnel, the dispatch of the technical assessment team and the eventual deployment of the peacekeeping force should therefore be increased. Any further delay will prolong the agony and suffering of the people of the Congo and result in more bloodshed in that country. We thank the European Union and all those who have assisted the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the peace process for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We call for their continued assistance.

Several international human rights instruments have been developed and ratified over the past 50 years which address the rights, protection and welfare of children.

Fundamental guarantees pertaining to the rights and needs of children are explicitly noted in these agreements.

There is, however, an urgent need for all parties to conflicts to respect fully the provisions of these international instruments. The impact of armed conflict on children in Africa has been particularly harmful, disproportionate and widespread. No region of the continent has been spared the scourge of armed conflict. It is true that the primary responsibility for bringing to an end the use of child soldiers lies with the relevant Governments and other parties to the armed conflicts. At the same time, the international community has a major role to play to ensure an end to the immoral use of children as soldiers.

We will continue to witness the tragedy of war-affected children who are severely malnourished, abused, raped and murdered at the hands of adults unless we all get involved and do something serious about it.

The Secretary-General has issued his report (S/1999/1003) on the Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, which, *inter alia*, states in paragraph 57 that,

"With the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement, the people of Sierra Leone have an opportunity to repair some of the damage caused by their long conflict and to set their country back on the road to peace and prosperity. In order to do so, they will have to make a strong national effort, but they will need significant international assistance in that regard. Many of the efforts needed are of a long-term nature, requiring the commitment of the Government and donors for many years to come."

My delegation could not agree more.

Namibia therefore supports the earliest deployment of the proposed peacekeeping force to Sierra Leone, to be known as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Only then can the people of Sierra Leone begin to nurture peace in their country. We must act with the same urgency to address conflict situations in Africa as we do elsewhere in the world. Peace in Africa will benefit us all.

It is important for the international community not to be seen to be selective when dealing with various humanitarian situations around the globe. The Secretary-General stated in paragraph 104 of his progress report (S/1999/1008) that

"As of 31 August, the United Nations had received only half of the \$800 million it had requested to meet humanitarian needs in Africa".

The time has now come for the international community to pay equal attention to all conflicts.

However, we are of the view that reacting to humanitarian situations alone is not enough. The international community should spare no effort in addressing the root causes of conflict. Democracy, good governance, accountability, transparency and the rule of law have all taken root in most countries in Africa. These must, however, be accompanied by the necessary development assistance if they are to be sustained.

Never before has a region been the subject of so many reports in the United Nations yet the situation seems to remain the same. In the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa has provided recommendations which hold the key to solving Africa's problems. The recent OAU summit held in Algiers has once more demonstrated the resolve of African States to make peace and development the rule in Africa. What is needed, therefore, is the political will to earnestly assist Africans to make peace and security in Africa a reality.

The President: I thank the representative of Namibia for his kind words addressed to my Government and to the presidency.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): Slovenia appreciates the leadership of the Netherlands and Ambassador van Walsum personally as President of the Security Council for this month and welcomes your personal initiative, Sir, to convene this open debate on the situation in Africa.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his impressive progress report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The progress report provides valuable insights into the practical work which has been taking place since April last year and shows that the problems of Africa are very much at the centre of attention and action of the Secretary-General.

The Security Council, in turn, has been giving much of its attention to specific situations in Africa, and at the

same time has tried to establish the necessary conceptual framework for its own future action. Much of that work was accomplished in the ad hoc Working Group of the Security Council, ably chaired by Ambassador Denis Dangué Réwaka of Gabon.

In my statement I wish to refer to several areas in which I believe further action is necessary. The first is inter-institutional cooperation, especially cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and a number of subregional organizations in Africa. The Security Council is consistently supporting the efforts of the OAU and subregional organizations, and is prepared to enhance the effectiveness of that support. We were therefore pleased to see Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the Secretary-General of the OAU, in our midst this morning. We would like to see him as often as possible in our midst, with the aim of strengthening coordination and cooperation between the two Organizations. Together we must ensure the synergetic effects of the implementation of our respective mandates and avoid situations in which complex regional procedures produce undue delays and diminish the effectiveness of the support of the United Nations for the OAU.

Another area where the Security Council needs to engage in further thinking and specific action relates to sanctions. It is indicative of the tragedy of Africa that the majority of sanctions imposed by the Security Council have been directed against Member States or specific groups in Africa.

Sanctions, as the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 25 of his last year's report on Africa, have a way of inflicting costs on unintended victims. In response to the pressing need to make sanctions a more targeted, effective and less blunt instrument, the chairpersons of the sanctions Committees launched an initiative in September last year which resulted in the preparation of an issue paper and a set of practical proposals concerning sanctions imposed by the Security Council. These two documents led to the adoption of a note by the President of the Security Council on the work of the sanctions Committees. That note includes a number of concrete measures to improve the effectiveness of sanctions regimes and to alleviate their unintended side effects. This line of Security Council activity has to continue.

In the context of efforts aimed at improving the Security Council's applied sanctions in Africa, it is important to note the recent experience of the Libya sanctions Committee, established by Security Council

resolution 748 (1992). The events of this April have shown that the Security Council is not only capable of imposing sanctions, but, when the necessary conditions are created, of suspending them as well.

We share the opinion that greater use should be made of targeted sanctions and that more attention should be paid to their unintended adverse effects. However, we also believe that there is a need to ensure more serious enforcement of the existing sanctions regimes by the international community. We especially support efforts aimed at improving the implementation of arms embargoes and stemming illicit arms flows to and within Africa. In this connection, we would like to recognize the indefatigable efforts of Ambassador Robert Fowler of Canada to facilitate a political solution of the Angolan crisis by limiting the ability of UNITA to pursue the war option.

Illicit flows of arms and other conventional weapons represent one of the major obstacles to peace. We are witnessing this in Angola, in Sierra Leone and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which are the most acute problems of the continent today. We are aware of the fact that the availability of arms is not the main reason for fighting, but it does help and encourage the latent problems to erupt. On 19 November 1998 the Security Council adopted resolution 1209 (1998), which addressed this question and considered what role the United Nations and Member States might play in responding to the challenge of illicit arms flows to and within Africa. We are pleased to see that this Security Council action complements several regional initiatives.

We welcome the initiative of Mali, through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to declare a moratorium on the production and transfer of small arms, involving 16 countries. It is also heartening that the Secretariat of the OAU has strengthened its Centre for Disarmament in Togo. We welcome the decision of the OAU to organize a regional conference on small arms that will provide specific recommendations on the halting of the use, transfer and illegal manufacturing of small arms, and on all other ongoing activities that are mentioned in the Secretary-General's progress report.

The Security Council last year adopted a number of specific proposals for the strengthening of African peacekeeping potential. We are pleased at the ongoing efforts to deepen the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, as well as with other regional and

subregional arrangements. Effective peacekeeping operations on the African continent require military contingents that are skilled in specialities such as tracking, anti-mine warfare, low-intensity conflict and law enforcement activities. It is recognized that the military potentials in Africa are very well suited to these tasks.

However, as the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 26 of his progress report, the enhancement of African capacity for peacekeeping is contingent on the provision of logistic support. For at least some time in the future, Africa will therefore need help in constructing the foundations of regional security systems and in dealing with conflicts that occur along the way. It is imperative that the United Nations and the international community provide the necessary assistance.

Ultimately, Africans must assume the lead in transforming their security environment and must help the United Nations understand how it can best support them in their efforts, given the extent of its global responsibilities.

Most, if not all, military conflicts in Africa are characterized by severe humanitarian problems, which need to be addressed with the greatest urgency. In the past year, the Security Council has held several open debates on various aspects of this issue. The conclusions of these debates are relevant to the conflict situations in Africa and need not be repeated at any length today. Let me therefore mention only that we agree with the Secretary-General in his appeals to increase humanitarian assistance and to further improve coordination between the organizations and agencies active in this field. In particular, we emphasize the importance of expanding the concept of children as "zones of peace" and, more generally, the work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. We would like to encourage him and others involved in these activities to pay particular attention to such measures as anti-polio and other vaccination campaigns which have in the past helped to establish ceasefire arrangements and have produced a number of valuable humanitarian effects.

I wish to note that many conditions for peace and sustainable development in Africa do not belong on the immediate agenda of the Security Council. Nevertheless, the Council must be aware of their importance in order to understand the limits to how far its decisions can reach and to harmonize its actions with the activities of other United Nations organs.

In our opinion, one of the most powerful messages of the Secretary-General's report (S/1999/318) is the emphasis on the intrinsic link between the promotion of economic growth and the construction of durable peace. Good governance and sound economics are the best guarantees against armed conflicts. In this connection, it is worth noting that much of the current debate on economic growth offers some reasons for hope.

Hypotheses about dynamic gains in trade are at the core of many new economic models of so-called endogenous growth. According to these models, long-term economic growth depends on increased productivity and innovation, and the incentives for both depend on the scope of the market. As such, these models provide encouragement for local efforts to strengthen the private sector and carry out the necessary macroeconomic reforms.

Economists still stress, however, that the gains in economic growth might not actually be shared by all. Lack of adequate basic infrastructure, especially absence of an effective transportation network, severely limits opportunities for extensive trade. Climate may also have serious adverse effects on economic growth. The tropics impose additional burdens of debilitating infectious diseases — most notably malaria — not found in the temperate zones. In 1995, for example, countries with severe malaria had income levels only one-third of countries without malaria. For these reasons, it is safe to say that a significant portion of Africa's population faces severe geographical obstacles to development.

It is important to bear these special African constraints in mind when discussing issues of such major significance to Africans as access to foreign markets and, most importantly, the unsustainable debt burden. The recent Cologne initiative on debt represents a welcome effort to provide fast relief through major changes to the heavily indebted poor countries framework. Nevertheless, more needs to be done. Adherence to International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programmes is still a prerequisite for receiving debt relief. Serious thought has to be given to the calls for debt cancellation and to rethinking the role of IMF in Africa. The current arrangements do not seem to be solving Africa's basic problems and tend to divert attention away from fundamental challenges such as disease control, development of human resources and environmental management. These issues should of course be discussed further, and in depth in the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly.

The problems of peace in Africa require constant attention. The current open debate is an important phase in that process. The Security Council should be able to offer both vision in addressing the underlying causes and an ability to address specific crisis situations in Africa effectively.

The President: I thank the representative of Slovenia for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to extend to you, Mr. President, and to your delegation, my deep appreciation and thanks for the great efforts you made in organizing this meeting, which is part of the follow-up to the action taken since the ministerial meeting last year on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

I welcome the important statement of the Secretary-General this morning. I also commend him on his progress report on implementation of the recommendations in the report regarding the causes of conflict in Africa. I appreciate the report's valuable information about the efforts made in this context.

I should also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for having participated in this meeting. This will undoubtedly help to strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations system and the OAU. It will also help us to find a common denominator on how to implement the Security Council decisions and presidential statements on how to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

Matters involving Africa have always taken up a large share of the Council's deliberations. Peace and calm have indeed been restored in some areas. We believe that those successes were due to cooperation between the parties to the conflict and the international and regional organizations as they tried to find peaceful solutions. Also there was compliance with the provisions of the peace agreements that were signed.

In addition, the international community's political and material support is needed for African regional organizations so that they can continue their efforts to end armed conflicts and restore peace and security in the areas of conflict.

The report shows clearly that the Secretary-General, and thereby the organs of the United Nations, have made

many efforts to implement the recommendations regarding support for regional and subregional initiatives that aim at preserving peace and eliminating the causes of conflict in Africa. Two Special Representatives participated very effectively in different negotiations under the auspices of the OAU and other regional organizations in Africa.

The Secretariat has also held special meetings on how to help certain African countries avoid the outbreak of conflict.

One of the steps taken by the Security Council to put an end to conflicts, where the parties did not respond to international and regional appeals to respect ceasefires and to start negotiations that would lead to peace agreements was the imposition of sanctions on those involved in the fighting. In this respect, the Bahrain delegation endorses the Secretariat's approach in encouraging the efforts of the Member States and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to make the sanctions imposed by the Security Council more effective but less cruel. We would not like the sanctions to have a negative impact on the people rather than on the leaders, who are the ones primarily targeted.

Another factor that leads to conflict in Africa is the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We therefore approve the approach of convening a subregional conference on the proliferation and illicit trafficking in arms and drugs. We also support the idea of understanding the consequences of illicit trafficking in arms. In this context, we stress the need for developing a strategy to deal with the problem, with a view to eliminating it through setting up controls on the manufacture, export and import of weapons.

On strengthening African capacity for peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building, we urge the United Nations to intensify its work in organizing and training civilian police for peacekeeping purposes.

We also support seminars on the administration of missions. We believe that providing the necessary funds to develop and complete this task is an important question that should be studied carefully.

The offices established by the United Nations to provide assistance in post-conflict peace-building situations in various African countries play a very important role, because they help to create appropriate

conditions for the re-establishment and consolidation of peace by supporting national reconciliation efforts. Of course, their success depends largely on greater organizational and financial support from international financial institutions.

Humanitarian assistance provided to African countries is an important priority when we look at conflicts in Africa. In this connection, we would like to emphasize the importance of coordinating the assistance provided and of ensuring free and unhampered access to humanitarian personnel and supplies. We also have to make sure that assistance actually reaches the people who need it.

The tragic humanitarian situation of many refugees and displaced persons in various African countries — particularly that of women, children and the elderly — means that the international community, and donor countries in particular, must provide the resources necessary for humanitarian assistance prescribed by the humanitarian agencies of the United Nations.

We note that the report of the Secretary-General highlights international efforts aimed at encouraging economic growth in Africa. This involves increasing transparency in public administration, strengthening administrative capacities, creating an atmosphere favourable to investments, enhancing competitiveness and introducing proposals aimed at exploring strong initiatives to alleviate the debt of highly indebted poor countries in Africa.

It is also worth noting that these efforts coincide with the measures that have been taken by various African countries to liberalize their trade, regulate their exchanges and privatize their obsolete State corporations. We hope that these positive changes will spur donors and developed countries to provide assistance to States to encourage them to persevere on the road they have chosen so that they may become models for other African States. The goal here is the realization of economic and social growth so it can lead to averting potential conflicts.

In conclusion, while we welcome the cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in Africa, and the strengthening of African peacekeeping capacity, we would also emphasize the need for continued assistance to African countries so that they may realize the utmost possible state of security and stability, which are essential to achieving prosperity and sustainable development for their people in the near future.

The President: I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

Mr. Kamal (Malaysia): My delegation commends the Netherlands for convening this formal meeting on a very important subject. The fact that you are presiding over the debate, Sir, demonstrates the importance your country attaches to African issues.

In a similar discussion during the ministerial-level Council meeting held a little over a year ago, many commended the Secretary-General for his candid and comprehensive report (S/1998/318) of 13 April 1998, which sought to give focus to the subject as a whole. Now the Secretary-General has issued a progress report (S/1999/1008) dated 25 September 1999 for the Council's further consideration. We note that the current report outlines follow-up actions that have been initiated or completed in the areas of peace and security, as well as in development and related areas, in implementation of the recommendations contained in his earlier report.

African issues dominate the work of the Council. The point of departure of today's meeting is our common and shared responsibility for international peace and security as it applies to Africa. We need to consider openly and critically how the Council has met this responsibility. We need to look ahead at what the Council and we as Member States can do differently and expeditiously.

Notwithstanding Kosovo and East Timor, many are still sceptical about the commitment and resolve of the United Nations to intervene in conflict situations in Africa. Only last week, the Council heard the appeal made by President Frederick Chiluba of the Republic of Zambia for the Council to be more forthcoming in its support for African peace efforts. Much of this hesitation is due to the failed intervention in Somalia and the non-intervention in Rwanda in the early 1990s. It was only last year that the Council finally began to take up peacekeeping efforts, as seen in the Central African Republic and Sierra Leone. It is our fervent hope that the current reassessment by the Council with regard to its Charter obligations will make it possible for the Council to avoid past reluctance and indecisiveness when faced with similar situations in the future. We urge the Council to establish clear criteria for authorizing peacekeeping and enforcement actions whenever situations arise, regardless of their geographical locations.

During the ongoing general debate in the General Assembly, arguments have been advanced both for and against humanitarian intervention in conflict situations. The Secretary-General initiated the debate, when he correctly pointed out that the Council cannot remain indifferent to grave humanitarian situations, and spoke of the need to apply the Charter in a consistent manner. On the other hand, many Member States have equally voiced the position that sovereignty is their last bastion against encroachment and interference in their internal affairs.

Whatever the merits of each argument, my delegation wishes to state unequivocally that the Council's authorization is a prerequisite for any use of force against Member States of the Organization. We share the view that the legal mandate given by having such missions authorized by the Council brings with it the assurance and confidence that this body has acted responsibly and on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization, as called for in Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Malaysia believes that as the Council attempts to focus more effectively in trying to resolve conflicts in Africa, a sustained political commitment is required in order to prevent the fragile truce in many parts of the continent from reigniting into bloodier fighting. The Council must assert its moral authority and deploy its entire gamut of diplomatic resources to promote peace and security. The United Nations is the only global mechanism for effective collaboration in circumstances in which States are reluctant or ill-placed to act alone. But it must be equipped with better tools and resources to do the job. The Organization must be given the means and support in order to succeed.

In the context of the current conflict situations in Africa, there is a need for an enhanced working cooperation and coordination between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. This is recognized by both organizations, and efforts are being made to put this into practical effect as they strive to resolve the various conflicts in the African continent. This enhanced cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity must be strengthened by sustained political support and commitment, backed by the necessary support in other areas. In this regard, we urge States and relevant international bodies to continue to provide financial and technical support to further strengthen African regional and subregional efforts for conflict prevention, the maintenance of peace and security, and dispute settlement.

Regional and subregional organizations can play an important role in the prevention of conflict and in peacekeeping. The efforts of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in respect of the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau are clear testimony of this. We wish to pay tribute to the commendable and courageous efforts of ECOMOG in the maintenance of regional peace and security in West Africa. We also recognize the efforts of other subregional organizations in Africa. However, regional peacekeeping efforts do not absolve the Council of its responsibility for peacekeeping in the context of the maintenance of international peace and security. It cannot subcontract its Charter-mandated responsibility. Since joining the Security Council at the beginning of this year, my delegation has raised, on a number of occasions, the need for Nigeria — the largest troop contributor to ECOMOG — to be supported to enable it to continue to maintain its peacekeeping troops in Sierra Leone for a longer period of time. Adequate support is imperative if ECOMOG is to continue to assist in consolidating the still-fragile peace process in Sierra Leone. Such forces are acting on the Organization's behalf and are sacrificing their lives for peace in the region. It is only proper and morally correct that we endeavour to provide the means to allow such troop-contributing countries to continue their presence in the conflict areas. In Sierra Leone, as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, what is needed most is prompt and decisive action from us in order to build on the momentum generated by the signing of the respective Lomé and Lusaka agreements.

My delegation notes with particular concern the proliferation of small arms in Africa, which clearly have contributed to the intensity and duration of the conflicts on the continent. We therefore strongly support the call for stricter controls of arms flows to conflict areas. We are equally concerned about the use of sophisticated weaponry, which would add a new destabilizing factor with regard to which Africa and the international community as a whole will have to be particularly vigilant.

Peace and security in Africa can be attained only through common action by Africa that is supported by the international community. We must bring our collective commitment and resolve to bear on the settlement of the crises in order to free up resources and energies for the essential task of economic and social development. Africa's well-being is in the interest of the international community.

We have seen just recently how swift and decisive the Council was in its action on the situation in East Timor. We expect the Council to do no less on African conflicts lest it be seen to be selective and apply double standards in its work. To borrow the words of the Secretary-General in his address to the General Assembly on 20 September 1999, at this fifty-fourth session,

"If the new commitment to intervention in the face of extreme suffering is to retain the support of the world's peoples, it must be, and must be seen to be, fairly and consistently applied, irrespective of region or nation. Humanity, after all, is indivisible."
(A/54/PV.4)

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words he addressed to my Government.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (spoke in Spanish): We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for the initiative of having convened this meeting. It is an initiative that shows the continuing concern of the Netherlands for the fashioning of an international order of peace and prosperity. We are grateful also to the Secretary-General for his broad-ranging and objective report on the subject before us.

We would like also to thank Mr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), for his statement, as well as the Permanent Representative of Algeria, who spoke on behalf of the Chairman of the OAU. Those contributions are highly valuable to the work of the Council.

Brazil has strong ties with Africa. To a great extent, it is to the Africans that we owe the shaping of our own nationality. We speak of Africans as brothers and always in a spirit of solidarity. We have many forms of effective cooperation with the African countries. At the bilateral level, for example, over the past four years we have welcomed over 1,800 students from African countries. Multilaterally, I might mention Brazil's participation in peacekeeping operations in Angola.

Throughout our history we have learned from Africans. We have no advice to give them or lessons to offer. Nonetheless, it is obvious that we view certain African issues with concern, in particular the persistence of armed conflicts and obstacles that continue to impede the process of laying the foundations of sustainable development throughout the continent.

It is therefore natural that Africa should be the subject of a specific series of actions by the United Nations. The African priority is reflected in many initiatives, recent examples of which are the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Special Initiative for the implementation of that Agenda, and the important report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The considerable success achieved towards building peace and democracy in Africa is a source of satisfaction for us all. Likewise, mounting frustrations emphasize the collective responsibility to support Africa's efforts to overcome conflicts and poverty. This highlights the need for the international community to demonstrate, with determination and through concrete deeds, its will to do more and to be more active and more effective in its efforts at cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, the countries of Africa and their subregional organizations.

The Security Council has been dealing with conflicts in Africa as they arise, but the actions that it has taken remain very timid. As was recently indicated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, day by day the perception grows among us that there is a permanent gap between words and deeds. It seems that the international community feels compelled to act jointly to mobilize the necessary political will and the needed instruments only after problems have worsened to the extent that they are extremely difficult to resolve.

What is taking place in Angola is a clear example of a conflict that, in spite of the disastrous consequences known to all, has not been given the priority that it needs from the international community. Along those same lines, President Chiluba, in his recent statement before the Council, made an eloquent appeal for more effective action by the Council in support of conflict settlement in Africa. We strongly support President Chiluba's message.

It is most important that the actions and decisions of Africans themselves should determine what happens in Africa. In this context, there are many achievements and positive trends that are the exclusive responsibility of Africans. First, there is the effort to democratize. The example of the extraordinary transition in Nigeria can be added to other processes whose impact and significance extend far beyond national borders.

The process of democratization in Africa, steadfastly supported by the resolutions of the OAU, is decisive not only in the establishment of a culture of participation and respect for human rights, but also in the promotion of basic conditions of stability for development. That is because the regulatory framework that results from democratic processes is innately stable and immune to arbitrary acts. It is therefore guarantee for the establishment and maintenance of conditions necessary for the security of economic investment.

The second positive trend, which began with the overthrow of apartheid in South Africa, is the African capacity to devise a culture of tolerance even in the most adverse conditions. The great world leader, Nelson Mandela, set an example that extends far beyond national borders and should serve as an inspiration for liberating African countries from the evils of fratricidal struggle.

The process of independence and democracy-building in Namibia and the national reconciliation in Mozambique are also eloquent examples of the African capacity to construct peace through dialogue and participation. We hope that similar processes will take place in countries such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as in other conflict situations.

In turn, democracy, when strengthened, is a factor for understanding and for harmonizing differences, whether intra-national or international. Democracy is also a vehicle for the promotion of peace and reconciliation between neighbours.

The third positive trend is the range of international actions to support the clear path of legitimacy, as in the strengthening of sanctions against UNITA, which took place under the leadership of Ambassador Fowler; the action to stem the illicit traffic in arms; and the efforts of the United Nations system to establish effective mechanisms to support reconstruction, rehabilitation and the promotion of sustainable development in countries emerging from conflicts. The strengthening of humanitarian assistance and of peacekeeping operations is also playing a role in that same process, which is why they, too, should be strongly supported.

As I said earlier, we are referring to trends, and it is absolutely necessary that the international community respond in a clear and positive way to those trends in order to strengthen them and to contribute to the efforts that the African countries themselves are continuously making. But I emphasize that the roots of the solutions to African

problems lie in Africa, as Mr. Salim said in his eloquent statement.

Without the African struggle of the 1960s, the principle of self-determination would not be as strong as it is today in international society. Democracy in an Africa at peace will create conditions for a better and more stable world. We all need a strong, united Africa, confident in its destiny of peace and prosperity. That is the aspiration of us all. It must be the destiny of Africa.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for the kind words he addressed to my Government.

Mr. Jobe (Gambia): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to commend the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for organizing this meeting. The level at which your delegation is represented, Sir, is a clear manifestation of the interest and commitment your Government has for Africa, for which we are also grateful.

May I also thank our able Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his detailed report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Contrary to widely held beliefs, the African continent is changing rapidly, this time for the better. No longer is it the norm to have a military dictatorship or a dictator as head of State. Democratic election as a means of gaining political power is taking root. The declaration by African heads of State and Government at the Algiers summit is clear testimony to this trend.

On the economic front as well, the African States are not doing badly. Liberalization of trade and exchange controls, privatization of industries and reform of regulatory and legal frameworks, which are prevalent in many States, clearly indicate the determination of African States to forge ahead in economic advancement for the betterment of the African people.

Unfortunately, however, this is not the whole story. While some good news is coming from many countries in Africa, the overall situation is overshadowed by conflict, civil strife, economic stagnation, refugee problems, poverty and deadly diseases. Today quite a number of African States are gripped in armed conflict, while the great majority of the Africans languish in abject

poverty. Over 8 million of its people are refugees, returnees or internally displaced persons.

This dismal picture notwithstanding, African States have begun to take greater responsibility to mitigate the plight of their peoples. And, as such, African States are making greater efforts at conflict prevention, management and resolution. The report of the Secretary-General under consideration clearly shows the successes recently achieved in several theatres of conflict, including Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation acknowledges the fact that the conflicts facing Africa are complex. In dealing with them, we agree with the Secretary-General that the root causes of the conflicts should be addressed, and not merely their symptoms. Any interventions to this end would require the involvement of the entire United Nations system. In this connection, we appreciate the efforts of various United Nations agencies and funds which are mentioned in the report.

We must, however, mention the special responsibility of the Security Council as the body which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. I will return to that matter.

The reluctance of the Security Council to deploy peacekeeping operations to Africa is unacceptable. We know that the failure in Somalia was bitter, but inaction in Rwanda and elsewhere is even worse. The failure of the Council to act in the face of serious threats to peace, security and human lives in Africa threatens the credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council.

It is no longer credible to use financial costs as a guiding principle for intervention. The United Nations should consider ways of providing more funding for peacekeeping operations. In this context, we support the appeal of the Secretary-General for more contributions to the United Nations and OAU trust funds, not as a substitute, but to complement funding of peacekeeping operations in Africa from the regular budget.

The situations in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea will soon come up for consideration by the Council for the possible deployment of peacekeeping operations. The people of Africa will be watching carefully to see what the United Nations does. Undoubtedly, the credibility of the Security Council will again be put to the test. We hope that the Council will, on these occasions as well as others, rise to

the challenge and come not with half-hearted measures, but with adequate measures to resolve those conflicts.

African States are now prepared to take their own initiatives to address conflict situations in the continent. Through subregional organizations and the Organization of African Unity, significant breakthroughs have been achieved. Through such mechanisms, African States will continue to contribute to conflict resolution.

However, the responsibility has to be shared. We value the cooperation among the United Nations, the OAU and subregional organizations in this regard. We have taken note of the initiatives of the Secretariat to enhance such cooperation and coordination, and we encourage the heads of the organizations concerned to continue their efforts. The partnership among the United Nations, the OAU and subregional organizations in Africa for peacekeeping is vital for obvious reasons. Strengthening Africa's peacekeeping capacity is therefore crucial. The activities of the Secretariat for this purpose, as outlined in the report, are most welcome. We must, however, emphasize that shifting responsibility for peacekeeping from the Council to the regional or subregional levels for reasons of political expediency should be avoided. As many speakers today have stressed, the Security Council cannot sub-contract its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It cannot be gainsaid that in addressing the issue of the causes of conflict in Africa, the problem of illicit flows of arms, including small arms, must be addressed as well. My delegation welcomes the importance the Secretary-General and the United Nations attach to this question. The recent open debate of the Council on this issue will further contribute to efforts to bring about greater public awareness of this problem as a precursor of global action. We welcome and encourage the efforts of the Secretariat to heighten awareness of this problem in the African continent by engaging subregional organizations in Africa, as well as African States, in the search for solutions to this problem. Identifying international arms merchants and restricting the manufacture of and trade in small arms could contribute to reducing the troubling phenomenon of the excessive proliferation and illicit flow of arms. We encourage the Secretariat to continue its feasibility study on this, and we look forward to the recommendations that the Secretariat may submit.

Strengthening arms embargoes could also help in reducing the flow of arms. The work of the sanctions Committee under the chairmanship of Ambassador Fowler is very encouraging. However, the Secretariat should continue in its efforts to encourage African States to adopt measures to criminalize violations of Security Council arms embargoes.

In recent times, we have seen that civilians, in particular women, children and members of other vulnerable groups, suffer the most from conflicts. The recent report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which was considered by the Council recently, clearly spells out the magnitude of the problem. Ensuring adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law by all parties to a conflict is absolutely imperative for the security of civilians. In this context, my delegation values the important roles being played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, by the United Nations Children's Fund, by the World Health Organization, by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. My delegation also supports the various efforts undertaken by the Secretariat in conflict situations to improve the situation of civilians, in particular that of children.

A series of interventions might be necessary to help societies emerge from conflicts. However, helping to bring a conflict to a close should not be the end of our interventions. Societies emerging from conflict often require post-conflict support structures in order to help avoid a relapse into fighting. The establishment of post-conflict peace-building support offices in Liberia and more recently in Guinea-Bissau is a good example of how post-conflict support structures can contribute to the consolidation of peace. My delegation would encourage the establishment of such structures, as appropriate, for countries emerging from conflict.

The report of the Secretary-General is very detailed, and it cannot be considered in all its aspects within the limited time we have at our disposal. We can only encourage him to continue in his crusade. But we must all work together to implement the many recommendations that are contained in his report on Africa. We hope that the Secretary-General and others will continue to keep the issue of the African continent alive both inside and outside the Council. We hope that in this way greater international attention will be focused on the problems of Africa, not only on the issue of conflicts but also on the wider issues,

including economic and social issues, that must be addressed as some of the many root causes of conflict. We say this because we believe that there should be a coordinated and comprehensive approach to Africa, for its problems are diverse and complex.

In this context, we welcome the interest generated by the report of the Secretary-General both within the United Nations and in other forums. It is our fervent hope that others will join in the debate to find a way forward on both the political and the socio-economic fronts.

As we enter the new millennium, we should forge a new partnership on Africa: a partnership for the renaissance of a continent long abandoned, a continent that has too frequently been marginalized. The time has now come for Africa to be respected at least for what it is. It needs friends and it needs solidarity. It is the fervent hope of my delegation that the international community will muster the political will and come forward to work with us. Together, there is no conflict we cannot settle; together, there are no economic difficulties we cannot address. All that Africa asks for is support and understanding.

I turn now to the Security Council. We know that the imposition of sanctions is a powerful coercive measure by which to put people on the right path. Of late, one African State, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, has been subjected to sanctions. We have followed the gradual negotiations in these chambers, and note that those sanctions are now suspended.

We have also observed that that same country recently organized a meeting of African heads of State or Government that is generating a lot of hope for the African continent. It is in that spirit that we would like the United States to join the United Kingdom in reaching out to that country to bring it back into the international community — of which it is already a member. That would not only contribute to reducing tension in the continent, but would give us new hope for consolidation of the results of the Sirte meeting, at which we decided that, given the various arguments heard in this very Council without any solid results for the continent, it was time for action. When we saw the rapid decisions taken on Kosovo and on Timor, we thought that, at Sirte and following Sirte, we would look for means of addressing our own problems.

We do not want this to be in the absence of the Security Council, and I therefore appeal to all members, in a fraternal spirit, to understand that only dialogue, not exclusion, can help us forge and strengthen the links that led to the creation of this Organization.

The President: I thank the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia for the kind words he addressed to the Government of the Netherlands.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (spoke in French): I wish at the outset, Sir, to join other speakers in congratulating you, your country and your Permanent Representative to the United Nations for organizing this meeting. Your uninterrupted presence in this Chamber throughout this debate, Mr. Prime Minister, shows more vividly than any statement the depth of the commitment of the Netherlands to the cause of development and peace in Africa.

I should also like to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for the excellent quality for his report, which is an extremely useful assessment as we consider the recommendations that were made in the April 1998 report (S/1998/318).

We have also heard a very clear statement from the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I take this opportunity to thank him for his tireless activity, to further the cause of Africa and for his efforts to resolve the conflicts there.

We also listened carefully to the statement by the representative of Algeria, the country that currently holds the office of chairman of OAU. I believe that he gave us a very full picture of the situation in Africa, both the bright spots and the darker shadows.

Since the Security Council asked the Secretary-General for a report on Africa and thereby demonstrated its heightened interest in the future of that continent, criticism of the Security Council have resurfaced about how its degree of commitment to crises in Africa may not be the same as in crises elsewhere. Certain comments have been made on the differing levels of our commitment depending on the region involved. This has been said quite forcefully by many speakers; as the representative of Malaysia has pointed out, however, our world is one and indivisible.

We must heed the criticism, of course. However, the meeting we are holding today is indeed a welcome initiative because it will without a doubt try to respond to these justified comments, some of them critical and in any

case it will enable us to renew our resolve to be as objective and impartial as we resolve to be when we met on the suggestion of the Secretary-General two years ago.

The picture has not been as bleak since then as is sometimes painted. The Secretary-General quite rightly made this very point: it is not all negative. The Secretary-General's report lets us see the areas where there have been positive and encouraging developments. It also allows us to see clearly the areas where much still remains to be done.

I shall not speak about the economic and social side of the situation: the representative of Algeria this morning painted a very accurate picture of it. I believe that the information he gave us justification for what we already take as given: we must keep on giving development assistance. However dynamic some sectors may be, it is still absolutely certain that assistance is still needed, and as we have undertaken to do, we must make a sustained effort to provide official development assistance.

Today, though, we are focusing on what has happened since April 1998 in the area of conflict prevention and settlement as well as maintenance of peace and security, which are very directly within the Council's remit. First of all, it is encouraging to see how vitally alive the regional and subregional organizations in Africa are. They have been encouraged to play a part and they have done so. Often, the part they have played has been a determining factor in settling conflicts. Let me just give a few recent examples.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), thanks to the persistence and the effectiveness of several of its leaders, and particularly its Togolese presidency, achieved the Peace Agreement for Sierra Leone which was signed in Lomé on 7 July last. We hope that it will be both definitive and lasting.

ECOWAS was also able to achieve the Peace Agreement for Guinea-Bissau in Abuja on 1 November 1998. This was subsequently supplemented by an additional protocol signed in Lomé on 15 December that year. Unfortunately, the commitments made were not lived up to, and violence broke out again in May this year.

Another regional organization that played a positive role was the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In particular, President of Zambia, Mr.

Chiluba, with a mandate from SADC, succeeded in negotiating a peace agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was signed on 10 July this year in Lusaka by the States concerned, subsequently by one party to the rebellion and finally, on 31 August, by the Congolese Rally for Democracy. The Agreement is certainly a fragile one, but at least it offers a realistic chance of peace, a chance we must not miss, a chance for arriving at a settlement.

The Organization of African Unity as a whole has become involved in seeking a solution to the conflict which has pitted Ethiopia and Eritrea against each other for one and a half years now. The peace plan it prepared, thanks to the efforts of its secretariat and its Chairmen, is now recognized by everyone as the only option, although agreement has yet to be reached on the technical arrangements for implementing it.

Finally, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development is continuing its efforts to find a way out of the internal conflict which has been ripping Somalia apart for too many years now.

This enhanced and often fruitful intervention by regional organizations is commendable. It is what we urged here two years ago. This is progress, but the part played by the regional and subregional organizations of course outside Africa does not release the United Nations and partners from their responsibilities. Here again, the experience of the past 18 months has shown that unless there is key support from the international community, the progress achieved by the Africans themselves is likely to be fragile.

For example, in Guinea-Bissau, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was unable to deploy early enough or in sufficient numbers to carry out effectively the tasks assigned to it by the Abuja Peace Agreement and the Lomé protocol. France made a logistical and financial contribution, but other material assistance would certainly have been needed also. But the speed and scale of deployment of peacekeeping forces are often the key to success and to the solidity of a peace agreement, particularly when, as in the case of Guinea-Bissau, the atmosphere is very tense and fragile.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lusaka Peace Agreement provides for intervention by a United Nations peacekeeping force. The initial stage has just started with the deployment of military liaison officers. The second stage will be to deploy military observers within the

country. Just now we have heard SADC members express the hope that the Security Council will shoulder all its responsibilities without delay. Certainly SADC members are prepared to make an effort, and they are eager to do so; but I think that they are right in asking for the entire international community, through the United Nations, to do its part. We must not disappoint these hopes that have been fostered by the peace Agreement properly negotiated by the countries of the region.

In Sierra Leone, the Lomé Peace Agreement provides for expanding the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). This would involve adapting UNOMSIL's mandate and significantly increasing its resources. The United Kingdom yesterday presented the Council with certain proposals in this connection, and here again this is a simple, concrete case in which we are called upon to act in a manner that is consonant with our stated positions, which are often quite general and sometimes lofty, but which must be translated into action.

In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic has been able to preserve peace and security, protecting that country from being infected by the fighting in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Mission has also been able to create a favourable climate so that the legislative elections in late 1998 were able to take place in conditions of peace and integrity — and we hope for as much for the presidential election scheduled for this month.

Once an agreement is reached between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the United Nations will be asked to make a contribution to the deployment of observers, as foreseen in the OAU framework agreement.

Finally, where peace has been restored, the mission of the United Nations is to stimulate and coordinate the reconstruction of the economy and the rule of law. This is, for example, the very useful role that the Secretary-General's Representatives and the United Nations Offices in Liberia and Guinea-Bissau are playing, and we believe that the human and material resources of those Representatives and Offices deserve to be increased.

At a time when there is, quite rightly, talk of the need to strengthen African capacities for peacekeeping, we should draw the lessons from how recent crises have

been handled. An African multinational force is viable only if an African country is willing and able to act as the lead nation — something like the part played and still being played by Nigeria within ECOMOG in Sierra Leone. And an African multinational force is viable only if it has external logistic and financial support. It is in this context that we have to consider the joint efforts of the United States, the United Kingdom and France over the last few months, under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the OAU, to help interested African countries strengthen their peacekeeping capacities. This is, I believe, a good illustration of how cooperation among various countries can provide concrete assistance to development in Africa. Some of these countries, such as France and the United Kingdom, have had particular responsibilities in Africa, with all that has entailed in the form of positive involvement, and also of aspects that at times may have deserved further review.

If there is no regional solution that can establish a multinational African force, as would seem to be the case in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, then the lesson of past months and years is that the Security Council itself must be ready to shoulder its responsibilities and to send a United Nations peacekeeping force where it is needed to ensure respect for a peace agreement. Here the problem is quite simple. It is not just a question of speeches, but of making contributions, in accordance with the rules of the Organization, so that financial obligations can be fulfilled.

Of course, apart from these positive developments, problems remain. Angola remains immersed in armed confrontation, and unfortunately, it must be admitted that for the moment the United Nations still has only a marginal role there. Nonetheless, this tragic situation has led the Security Council to think seriously, encouraged by the Chairman of the relevant sanctions Committee, Ambassador Fowler, about ways and means of ensuring real respect for sanctions against UNITA, particularly with regard to the arms embargo, in the spirit of resolution 1196 (1998).

As was emphasized in last week's debate, the destabilizing effects of the circulation, accumulation and sale of small arms and light weapons are particularly devastating in Africa. In his report the Secretary-General reviews public-awareness measures that have been taken, but this is not enough; we have to act much more concretely and vigorously, in the spirit of the appeals we made in resolution 1209 (1998) and the presidential statement of last 24 September.

Finally, in the shadows of several conflicts in Africa, we often see illicit trafficking in precious materials — diamonds in particular — and sometimes we also see large-scale looting of the natural resources of a country by foreign armies and armed groups, which in this way finance their war efforts and buy weapons. Although it is clearly a difficult challenge, any effort to combat this trafficking and looting must be encouraged, not only by improving the application of any existing sanctions that deal with such trafficking, but also by trying to expose such incidents of organized looting.

The Secretary-General was right to say at the end of his report that "Afro-pessimism" is a dead end. Given the crises and conflicts that are ripping the continent of Africa apart, we need to show the political will to resolve problems and to acquire the resources to do so. And we need coherence between the general, lofty ideas that we proclaim in debates such as today's and the decisions that we must take on a case-by-case basis when we really try to resolve a crisis. In this connection, it is good that, thanks to you, Mr. President, we are having this debate, which allows us to confront realities and to see what we are really resolved to do at a time when the Security Council must take very concrete action in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demonstrate — if it is really serious — its commitment to peace in Africa.

The President: I thank the representative of France for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (spoke in Chinese): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for once again submitting a report on Africa and for the statement he made this morning. I would also like to thank Mr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the representative of Algeria, whose President is the current Chairman of the OAU, for attending today's meeting and for their statements.

At the same time, we would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. Wim Kok, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, for having come here to preside over today's meeting, and to the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands for its efforts in arranging this meeting.

We also welcome the presence at today's meeting of Ministers from many countries.

The Secretary-General's report on Africa last year had strong repercussions in the international community, arousing the concern and drawing the attention of countries around the world and relevant international organizations, especially United Nations bodies, to the question of Africa. Last year, the Security Council held an open debate devoted to this issue, established an ad hoc Working Group and adopted a number of resolutions and presidential statements. Today, it is of great significance that we are here once again to discuss the situation in Africa and to deliberate on the progress report prepared by the Secretary-General.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's report, which presents in meticulous detail and with incisive analysis the plans laid down, the work done and the achievements made by the United Nations system over the past year in accordance with the Secretary-General's recommendations in his previous report. We take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations bodies for their efforts to resolve the problems of Africa.

In the year since the Secretary-General's last report on Africa was issued, the African continent has experienced relative overall stability, continued economic growth, further progress in the democratization process and increased respect for human rights. Peace agreements were signed by the parties to the conflicts in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These are all positive developments. However, we must not fail to see at the same time that the African continent is still the least developed region of the world, overwhelmed by recurrent conflicts and huge numbers of refugees. The conflicts are deep-rooted and their causes include internal and external factors alike. The African issues do not lend themselves to easy solutions and represent a daunting challenge to the international community. I should now like to make a few observations on how the international community should proceed on this question.

First, the international community should pay adequate attention to Africa from a strategic vantage point. There are more than 50 countries on the African continent. They comprise approximately half the membership of the Non-Aligned Movement and nearly one third of United Nations membership. They are an important force for world peace. Africa has a time-honoured history and rich culture. The African people are hard-working and intelligent. The continent is brimming with vitality. With its vast area and abundant resources, Africa is a huge market with unlimited economic potential. It is an integral part of world economic development. With the acceleration

of globalization, the interests of countries around the world are linked more closely than ever. Without stability and prosperity on the African continent, there will be no peace or development in the world. Thus, to ensure world peace and development, it is vital to help African countries maintain stability and pursue development. The international community should treat Africa as an equal development partner and give energetic support and assistance to African countries in their endeavours.

Secondly, the international community should create a favourable external environment for Africa so that it may enjoy stability and sustained development. Towards this end, we call for the early establishment of a just and reasonable new international political and economic order. Currently, a small number of big and rich countries monopolize world affairs and dominate the international political and economic order. This state of affairs, which runs contrary to the prevalent forces of our times — multipolarization and globalization — does not reflect the needs of developing countries or help their development. For too long, Africa has been denied due concern and attention in international affairs and relegated to the lowest level of the international division of labour. Worse still, buffeted by the waves of globalization, Africa is in danger of being marginalized. If this situation is not reversed, there will be no peace or development in Africa to talk about.

Thirdly, the international community should respect the choices made by African countries themselves. The world is diverse, particularly on the African continent. Due to varying national conditions, similar issues may have different manifestations in different countries and at different times. Therefore, solutions should be tailor-made instead of uniform. The African people themselves best understand their situation and real needs. Only they can choose their path of development in the light of their specific situation. In its efforts to help Africa, the international community must take into account the specific conditions and needs of the African countries and peoples. Uniform models imposed from without do not necessarily fit the actual conditions of the African countries. The imposition of one set model and the attachment of political conditions to assistance would not really help African countries to escape their predicament.

Fourthly, the international community should give vigorous support to the efforts of regional organizations in Africa. In recent decades, regional organizations in Africa, such as the OAU, have played fundamental and important roles in safeguarding peace and stability on the

continent and promoting regional cooperation and development. At its thirty-fifth Summit, held in Algeria this year, the OAU reiterated the important principles of the African charter and adopted a series of resolutions to settle regional conflicts and to promote economic cooperation in Africa. This reflected the high hopes of African States for unity and renewal. It was an important event in OAU history.

In recent years, such regional organizations as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development have become increasingly active. Committed to settling conflicts and pushing for economic integration in their respective regions, they have scored stunning successes. Their work enjoys the wide support of African countries and peoples and testifies to the strong desire of African countries to join forces in the pursuit of self-reliance and renewal. The international community should spare no effort in supporting such endeavours on the part of African countries. In this connection, we call on the international community further to support and cooperate with regional organizations in conflict prevention and settlement and to provide necessary assistance in cash and in kind, without political conditions, to security and peacekeeping mechanisms in Africa.

Fifthly, the international community should take concrete and meaningful action to help African countries in their development endeavours. Africa is entering a new historical period characterized by the desire for peace and the pursuit of growth and progress. More than ever, it needs the support and assistance of the international community. We call on countries around the world, especially developed countries, to help Africa by making good on their commitments to providing official development aid, reducing the debt burden of African countries and withdrawing some of their own trade barriers. Moreover, the United Nations agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions should all play even more active roles. We believe that the Secretary-General's progress report should not be taken as a signal to end the implementation of his recommendations. On the contrary, it marks the beginning of the long road that the international community will have to travel.

China has always given high priority to the issues of Africa, supported Africa and had friendly relations and close cooperation with the vast number of African countries. China is heartened to see the positive developments in recent years on the African continent and

is disturbed by the continuing chaos and conflicts. We are deeply concerned by the damage done to African countries and the sufferings of the African people in conflicts, and we sympathize with them. We call upon the conflicting parties in Africa to put the fundamental interest of their country and people above everything else, and to work to solve their disputes and settle their conflicts through peaceful negotiations and other political means, in the spirit of African unity, so that peace and stability will be brought to the African continent soon.

China has always supported the legitimate demands and reasonable propositions of the African countries, as well as their efforts for the maintenance of political stability and the promotion of economic growth. We have participated actively in discussions at the United Nations on the question of Africa and pushed for the settlement of hot-spot issues; we have supported United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa and participated in some of them. At the same time, we are committed to strengthening our economic cooperation and trade relations with African countries, and we have offered various kinds of assistance to African countries, without attaching any conditions. In the ever-changing world, we are willing to work together with African countries to search for new ways and areas for cooperation so as to inject new vitality into our friendly relations.

Africa is a continent of hope. We firmly believe that, with the African countries making their own efforts and the international community offering necessary assistance, this continent will surely see an ultimate realization of peace, stability and sustained development. We hope that the international community and the African people will work in concert, grasp the opportunities, face up to the challenges and stride hand in hand towards the beautiful future of Africa in the new millennium.

The President: I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to the presidency and to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

I very much agree with what was said this morning by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and also by the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU): that it is important to highlight the positive developments that have taken place and are taking place in Africa. The many problems that face Africa today tend

to make the headlines, while the continent's promises are often overlooked. Like the Secretary-General, we would warn against "Afro-pessimism". That is why we called for this debate today.

Still, African countries are grappling with war, instability and lack of development. These issues are so fundamental that the way in which we meet these challenges — and meet them we must — will affect not only the lives and future of millions of Africans, but also the credibility of the United Nations, for many years to come.

The prevention and resolution of African conflicts requires the undiminished attention, the vigorous engagement and the firm, consistent support of the world community as a whole and of this Council.

Recently, the Security Council made a necessary and vigorous collective effort to restore peace and stability to East Timor, deploying a range of instruments of pressure and influence little used in the past. A similar determination is needed for the resolution of intractable conflicts in Africa and the elimination of their causes. Many of these causes call for painstaking, long-term efforts, addressing underdevelopment and the continent's related structural problems. It is equally urgent for us to give a credible answer to matters like arms flows and the reckless, uncontrolled conduct of warlords.

Deadly conflicts in Africa, like the one between Ethiopia and Eritrea, or the appalling humanitarian drama unfolding in Angola, risk becoming forgotten wars. It is necessary to redress this imbalance and to focus our political attention on these wars and their countless victims, too.

Africa is one of the top priority areas of the Netherlands foreign policy, including our development policy. Our view of the root causes of conflicts and the promotion of sustainable development closely mirrors the Secretary-General's report on the subject.

Our proposals for a common strategy can be summed up in a few words: first, to encourage and support positive developments in Africa in a coherent manner; secondly, to place the emphasis where we can make a difference; and, thirdly, to address the underlying causes of instability and underdevelopment.

For my country, that means assisting African efforts at conflict prevention and enhancing peacekeeping

capacities, through regional and subregional organizations. It means giving firm support to the integrated approach to conflicts and threats to peace, as advocated in the report of the Secretary-General. It means strengthening ties with African countries that are a force for stability on the continent. And it means concentrating bilateral aid relationships on countries with sound economic and social policies and good governance.

That is why we in my country are aiming to target at least 50 per cent of our development aid on Africa, and why debt relief for African countries is at the top of our agenda. Our policy is driven by humanitarian involvement and a sense of justice. The Netherlands will continue to provide substantial emergency aid to victims of conflict. We pledge that our efforts to rebuild the Balkans, which is of paramount importance for durable peace and stability on our European continent, will not be at the expense of our support for Africa.

The basic rule should be that peacekeeping is done by United Nations troops and financed from the United Nations peacekeeping budget. Unfortunately, too often we are forced into situations where regional peacekeeping efforts founder because of a lack of funds. As a result, complicated constructions have to be devised to serve the cause of international peace and security.

Fresh creative thinking on these issues is long overdue. African efforts at conflict prevention and peacekeeping should be vigorously supported. Let me suggest some options.

First, one idea currently being floated aims to link the extent of debt-relief with African participation in peacekeeping operations on the continent. I believe this idea can be taken further.

Secondly, where an African State undertakes to engage in a regional peacekeeping effort, enhanced assistance to that country should be considered.

Thirdly, we should take a creative look at new ways of strengthening the assistance we provide to boost preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping on the African continent.

I believe that these and similar ideas merit further examination, as part of the follow-up to the Secretary-General's recommendations and as part of our collective effort and obligation to stand by Africa in the new millennium.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Borys Tarasyuk. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tarasyuk (Ukraine): Ukraine appreciates and supports the Netherlands initiative in organizing this open and serious debate, so much needed by the African nations and the Security Council itself.

Let me also express gratitude to the Secretary-General for his briefing on this topic of fundamental importance for the United Nations.

The debates in the General Assembly have clearly shown the major challenges and grievances of humankind, which, unfortunately, have become hyper-magnified, most of all in Africa. Extreme poverty and lack of sustainable development, starvation and insufficient medical care are the hidden roots of the numerous armed conflicts which have swept across the continent, while economic recession and the inadequate protection of democratic values give birth to internal political instability, rebellious separatism, terror and the suffering of millions of people.

Therefore, as the highest universal Organization designed to promote global peace and security, the United Nations, and especially its Security Council, should pay primary attention to this most vulnerable continent. In this connection, my delegation believes that the kind of response provided so far by the Security Council to the real needs of the African continent should be invigorated and further pursued with the utmost perseverance and consistency. It is our common responsibility to bring peace, prosperity and sustainable development to this vast region.

As a founding member of the United Nations, Ukraine has always followed closely developments on the African continent and it supported the quest for independence of the peoples of Africa. We have a long record of providing this support in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, previously called the Committee on decolonization. Ukraine was also a very active member of the Special Committee against Apartheid, contributing to the elimination of this shameful phenomenon. That experience gave us a better understanding of the deep roots of existing problems, as well as of the complexity of their resolution.

In addition, Ukraine fully comprehends the problems of Africa, as a nation that regained its independence only eight years ago, and thus had to build its new State practically from scratch; it had to create institutions, introduce legislation and economic reforms and strengthen national identity. Therefore, allow me to share some ideas on what contribution we can all make to the efforts of the African nations to cope with their challenges.

First, we should promote advanced economic development of the region, both bilaterally and through concerted international efforts. For decades Ukraine maintained close traditional ties with African countries. Tens of thousands of African specialists graduated with higher education diplomas in Ukraine. Miles of railroads, highways and pipelines, as well as power stations and industrial plants, were constructed by Ukrainians in many countries of the African continent. After a short break, caused by our transition period, we are trying now to revive and expand these old bonds to make our contribution to economic growth and social stability, and to keep in touch with Africans' needs and aspirations. That was the main reason why Ukraine participated, for the first time, in the July summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Algiers, where I headed the Ukrainian delegation. I am deeply grateful to the Government of Algeria for the kind invitation.

Secondly, we can see that many of the current conflicts in Africa are caused by militant separatism, inter-ethnic tensions or intolerance, or are initiated by rebellious groups which resort to military force to meet their dubious ends. In this context, upholding the principle of the territorial integrity of nations within their recognized borders, Ukraine resolutely condemns any violent actions by rebels against populations and legitimate Governments.

We have gained experience in how to tackle such problems, both internally and in international relations. Ukraine has expertise in settling inter-ethnic tensions and promoting tolerance towards national minorities. One example is the successful resolution of the very delicate issues involved in bringing back, resettling and accommodating hundreds of thousands of deported Crimean Tartars, who enjoy all the rights of our democratic society and live in peace alongside other peoples of a multinational Ukraine.

Furthermore, Ukraine is making a tangible contribution to resolving the complex security problems

in its close neighbourhood, being a guarantor of peace in Transnistria, Moldova; an active promoter of the peaceful settlement in Abkhazia, Georgia, and Nagorny Karabakh, Azerbaijan; and a negotiator and proponent of peaceful initiatives from the very beginning of the Kosovo conflict.

Our experience in political mediation and peacekeeping activities can be of interest to African nations, especially in view of the ongoing debate about authorizing United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Sierra Leone. These first signs of increased attention by the Security Council to the problems of Africa will not only be important for the Lusaka and Lomé processes, but could also be of fundamental significance for the entire African continent.

In this connection, particular emphasis certainly has to be placed on closer cooperation by the United Nations with the Organization of African Unity and African subregional organizations. All this will provide clear testimony as to whether the ill-famed "Afro-fatigue syndrome" and "Afro-pessimism" have definitely given way to "Afro-enthusiasm".

Thirdly, many conflicts in Africa are aggravated by illicit arms sales and mercenary activity. Ukraine was one of the initiators of the drafting and adoption in 1989 of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and it complies in good faith with its obligations. Ukrainian legislation envisages severe criminal penalties for such activities, which are punishable by imprisonment for up to 12 years.

One of the acute problems often referred to is the need to strengthen arms embargoes and combat illicit arms flows in Africa. Ukraine commends the increased attention of the Security Council to these problems, and it is ready to fully cooperate in this field. We are seriously concerned about violations of the Council-imposed sanctions against the illegal arms trade. Such incidents indicate that international regulation in those areas has some serious breaches.

Ukraine has always strictly followed the policy of selling arms and military equipment to legitimate Governments or to companies authorized by such Governments. We have established an effective and reliable export control regime for arms sales, and are taking further measures to tighten it. At the same time, global practice now shows that, no matter how strong the export control

measures that a sovereign State can establish, it cannot give a total guarantee against subsequent violations by third parties. Therefore, Ukraine proposes to convene without delay, under the auspices of the United Nations, an international meeting of experts of major arms-producing countries. Its purpose would be to elaborate effective measures to prevent the reselling of arms from the end users to third parties, and to close gaps in the relevant international instruments.

Competent authorities of Ukraine are in possession of relevant information on illegal arms trafficking in some countries, and would be ready to share it with the Security Council, as well as with the Governments of concerned States. Ukrainian experts can participate in the work of a preparatory group to set up the agenda and work out the procedures for such an experts' meeting.

I fully share the words of my Dutch colleague that Africa is a land not of troubles only, but of happiness as well; a continent not of catastrophe, but equally one of hope. I wish to assure the Council that Ukraine was together with Africa at the dawn of its liberation. It will be together with Africa in its present challenges, to help it revive and become prosperous in the future.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine for his kind words addressed to my Government.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Comoros and Ghana in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aboud (Comoros) and Mr. Gbeho (Ghana) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abdul-Qader

Ba-Jammal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement now.

Mr. Ba-Jammal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am highly honoured to be afforded the opportunity to speak at this special meeting of the Security Council devoted to the issue of promoting Africa's capacity to transcend its state of instability, increase the chance of peace and establish peace in practical terms.

I am most gratified to see you preside over this meeting, Sir, since your country, the friendly Kingdom of the Netherlands, is linked to Yemen by close and firm bonds. The motivation of the Republic of Yemen in participating in these deliberations should be viewed against the background of Yemeni-African relations, which have historical, geographical, human, economic, cultural and social dimensions, particularly with our neighbours in East, Central and Southern Africa. Yemen is thus an authentic participant in all aspects of the historical process unfolding in these countries because it is affected negatively or positively by all the political, economic and social changes and developments which those countries undergo.

The coastline of the Republic of Yemen extends over more than 2,500 kilometres on the Red Sea, and its maritime area contains no less than 133 islands, the nearest to the African coast being those in the Gulf of Aden — they are no more than about 22 kilometres from the opposite coast. Thus, the Yemeni and African coasts, which are clearly visible the one for the other, form a unity based on proximity and on a territorial complementarity imposed by the nature of life and by historical and geographical factors, even though the relationship has lost its regional political and economic framework.

The Yemeni political leadership has made intensive efforts to achieve cooperation with a number of countries and with regional and international bodies with a view to finding solutions for the deteriorating situations in the Horn of Africa and East and Central Africa. The tragic spectacle of African life is daily aggravated by internecine wars between States, races and tribes. We in Yemen must face the effects of these conflicts daily since our country's shores receive thousands of people fleeing these hotbeds of war and dissension and from repugnant states of anarchy in search of safe haven. Their only hope is Yemen, which provides a sanctuary from this unremitting hell.

The burdens this puts on the Yemeni people and State are very great. The weak Yemeni economy cannot sustain the ever-increasing load. The tragedy is becoming ever

greater, and so far there is not a single ray of hope that peace and stability will be established in the region — especially in Somalia.

Regrettably, the major complications arising out of blatant external interventions are no secret any longer. These countries are presently experiencing further political and social fragmentation, the collapse of their institutions, economic and environmental backwardness, loss of human rights and the spread of hostile and poisonous relations in a most repugnant manner. This is the result of the chain of havoc wreaked by the will to dominate on the part of some States and groups.

The Government of the Republic of Yemen calls on the Security Council to assume responsibility for saving a situation where silence is no longer an option. It calls on the Council to support the efforts by the Organization of African Unity. It calls on the Council to expand the scope of its participation in order to find solutions that will safeguard the sovereignty of States and the unity and social concord of peoples. It calls on the Council to alleviate, on an ongoing basis, the harmful human and environmental effects that translate into hunger, poverty, epidemics and increases in the numbers of the displaced and the oppressed. The Council must endeavour to eliminate the causes of these conditions so as to halt their progression because this situation is a blot on the face of humanity.

Despite the negative effects and economic and environmental problems it faces, Yemen is fully prepared to participate with international and regional bodies and with active local forces in efforts to establish peace in the Horn of Africa and East Africa. However, it calls on the international community to assist it in coping with the burdens the situation places on its economy and on its available resources, and on the health of the human environment and its natural assets.

We stress that should the situation remain unchanged it will further endanger the maintenance of peace, threaten the safety of international and regional shipping and result in environmental pollution. Consequently, no one can deny that leaving the situation in these regions as it is will lead only to a more extensive and far-reaching catastrophe.

The Republic of Yemen has contained the crisis over the question of Yemeni Hanish with its African neighbour Eritrea in a peaceful and legal manner by resorting to international arbitration. Yemen feels that

peace can be consolidated only through international legitimacy and respect for the values and principles of civilized people, as an appropriate contribution to the cause of peace and stability in the region. This is a grave responsibility that should be appreciated by all and should be used as a model for emulation. Let us imagine a war breaking out between Yemen and its neighbour Eritrea: the effects of such a war would engulf the whole area and would affect the interests of other nations, especially since every 45 minutes a ship passes the island of Hanish loaded with fuel or tourists or cargo or is involved in fishing or research. Let us image then the catastrophe that would occur if war broke out in the Red Sea. But we decided to be prudent regarding this question. We must learn from each other and make use of the lessons we have learned. Reason and logic must prevail, as must peace, for the sake of humanity at large.

Once again we reiterate our confidence in the Security Council and we look to it to assume a more effective and diversified role by facing up to the situation in Africa and by helping its countries and peoples ensure peace and stability, in the full realization that all the African bodies and parties concerned must be aware of the active role they must play and the enormous responsibility they bear. This should be in the forefront of all international and regional endeavours.

We hope that these deliberations on peacekeeping in Africa will achieve the desired objectives and that the ideas put forward will be transformed into operational measures and effective mechanisms to safeguard the freedoms of the African peoples, their natural rights and their security and their stability.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen for his kind words addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, The Honourable Alexander Downer. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Downer (Australia): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address the Security Council today on the important issue of Africa. Africa/Australia links are long-standing. Our connection with Africa extends back at least to the 1790s, when, during the early years of European settlement in New South Wales, Cape Town provided Sydney with shipments of flour and barley that saved the infant colony from starvation. And legend has it

that the origin of the many eucalyptus trees that now grow in southern Africa can be traced back to seeds that were contained in the soil used as ballast for the colonial ships.

Our contemporary relations are based on the linkages we have with many nations of Africa through the Commonwealth, through direct people-to-people ties — as evidenced by an increasingly significant African community in Australia — and through growing economic and Government-to-Government links.

On Monday, I addressed the United Nations special session on small island developing States, emphasizing Australia's linkages with our own Asia-Pacific region. Clearly that is where our foreign policy priorities lie. But this is not to say that we do not have global horizons and that we do not recognize the fact that our relationship with Africa is one of real potential.

Our relations with the countries of Africa have always reflected our strong commitment to the principles of decolonization, self-determination and democracy, as well as an unwavering commitment to the struggle against apartheid. This was a commitment backed up by the application of sanctions at some cost to the Australian community. Australian soldiers have been involved in many United Nations and other international peacekeeping operations in Africa, including most recently in Western Sahara, Somalia and Rwanda. We are helping rid Africa of the scourge of landmines. We support the United Nations-fostered peace process in Angola and the efforts of the sanctions Committee under Ambassador Robert Fowler to strengthen sanctions against the UNITA rebels, and we support and encourage current regional peace initiatives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

These are practical examples of Africans working together to develop solutions for African problems. Australia will continue to support and encourage these regional efforts, just as we are demonstrating our readiness to contribute to regional solutions in our own Asia-Pacific region.

The African continent is home to some 700 million people, a significant part of humanity. By any major measure of the world's well-being, therefore — whether in health, an end to famine, the fate of the environment or peace and good governance — if Africa is not faring well, the world as a whole suffers.

Australia has a modest but carefully targeted aid programme in Africa that has been maintained at an average of over \$80 million Australian dollars a year over the past five years. We are helping African countries at a practical level with assistance in the areas of health, sport and education, including through scholarships and rural development programmes. Good-governance programmes — and these include more than just election monitoring — also make up a significant component of our aid budget.

Australia is also aware of the importance many African countries attach to the question of debt relief. Our Government supports the principle of providing faster, broader and deeper debt relief to heavily indebted poor countries, linked to the goals of poverty reduction, sustainable development and good governance. Australia announced at the September meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington just the other day that Australia would provide \$A 35 million to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. This is more than double our existing pledge.

We are realistic about the effects of this Initiative. We do not support unconditional debt relief that may give Governments an excuse not to pursue policies which promote sustainable economic growth and alleviate poverty. Unconditional debt relief could also encourage further accumulation of unsustainable debt or discourage creditors from providing future assistance. It is important that we work for a durable and sustainable solution to this problem. If debt relief is to be truly effective, it must be part of a process of sound economic management.

In the past few years, Australia's interests in Africa have taken on a new dimension with the emergence of Africa as a significant market for Australian trade. In the last five years, our exports have increased by almost 140 per cent, to \$2.2 billion — more than our exports to Latin America and Eastern Europe combined. Our imports from Africa have also doubled in about the same period, albeit from a low base. Much of this growth in trade is attributable to the opening up of the market in South Africa following the abandonment of apartheid and the liberalization of many African economies.

Australians have also begun to invest in Africa, against the overall trend of falling foreign direct investment flows into Africa. We estimate that Australian investment in sub-Saharan Africa currently stands at about \$A 2.5 billion. Much of this is associated with Australian mining ventures, particularly in countries such as Ghana and

Tanzania, where Australian mining companies have been taking a leading role in revitalizing the mining industry.

I have spoken today of Australia's ties with Africa. With the resourcefulness, stamina and goodwill between Australians and Africans, I know that we cannot fail to build stronger and more productive links between our two lands in the future. Australia stands ready to help the nations of Africa meet the challenges of the next century, just as we have lent a hand in the past. But we must all recognize that the most important, the most fundamental, work will be done by the peoples of Africa themselves. And in that regard, although the problems still to be overcome are formidable, there is cause for optimism.

In the past decade, we have seen the end of the stain of apartheid. We have seen great strides made in conservation and environmental protection, on a local and regional basis. We have seen the beginnings of a fundamental attack on endemic famine and poverty, and the development of more sustainable economies; and we have seen more countries commit themselves to the cause of reform and good governance.

The road of change and reform is one which no country finds smooth, but it is one that we must all take, for to do otherwise is to invite stagnation and long-term decay. There will be hardships ahead for the peoples of Africa as they take this path, but they can count on the support of the Australian people in their journey. It is with great confidence, therefore, that I look at Africa at the birth of the new millennium. May it mark a new beginning for all Africans in which we may realize the full potential of that ancient continent.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Malawi, The Honourable Brown J. Mpinganjira. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mpinganjira (Malawi): Malawi is very pleased to participate in this debate under your presidency, Sir. Dutch interest and involvement in Africa and African issues are quite well known and very well documented. We are therefore delighted that you were able to call for this meeting to discuss the situation in Africa.

We are also most grateful to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his useful briefing on the state of Africa, coming as it does soon after the briefing by President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia last week. We also thank

the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Salim Ahmed Salim, for his inspiring statement this morning.

There is no doubt that the messages that are coming out of this ancient continent are significant. These are declarations of renewed African commitment, signs of resolve and promises to act for peace and prosperity. These are voices that have come most recently from Algiers and from Sirte, with echoes all over the continent. They are calls that we believe should be taken seriously.

The question that always arises, though, is: what can the international community do to respond to Africa's call? And what can the Security Council, consistent with its responsibilities under the Charter, do to assist Africa?

The Secretary-General's incisive report on Africa last year was very specific in the recommendations that were offered. We stand by the statement that South Africa made then on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. We are pleased that the relevant principal organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, have devoted some time and effort to analysing and responding to the contents of that important report.

Given that it takes time for matters of this nature to coalesce and crystallize, the question still remains whether the response of the international community has been commensurate with the call to act with urgency, as contained in the Secretary General's report. The progress report of the Secretary-General, while optimistic, clearly shows that more needs to be done.

Today almost everybody acknowledges that since the end of the cold war, the world has undergone momentous and significant changes. The winds of change that have swept through the globe have rekindled hopes for a better future. Democracies have blossomed, although many remain nascent and fragile. Military dictatorships have started to give way to civilian governments.

At the end of the cold war, there were even calls for a new world order. However, most of those that have the capacity to help Africa and enable it to change for the better are reluctant to take any action, claiming that their national interests or the protection of their vital interests do not permit them so to do.

Quite often we have looked the other way, allowing arms, diamonds and other mineral resources to be sold in

order to protect our vital business interests and in the name of free trade, knowing full well that such arms or the proceeds of such sales were being used in armed conflict. We have deliberately broken the sanctions regimes.

Quite often we have used aid and technical assistance to advance our own interests. Otherwise, how does one explain the statement in the Secretary-General's report that 90 per cent of the \$12 billion a year spent on technical assistance is still spent on foreign expertise? We can and must do something to change this, because clearly Africa is not getting what it is said to be getting.

The point that we are trying to make is that so long as national interests or vital interests continue to inform and direct our involvement in international affairs, the chances that meaningful change will come appear very slim. We must redefine "national interest". It must of necessity give way where international consensus to act exists. It must not block such consensus.

While the task is not easy, it should not be difficult for the Security Council. Under the Charter of this Organization the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the Security Council. This is a responsibility that the entire membership has conferred on the Council. The Council must therefore act to advance the interests of the international community as a whole and not of individual members of the Council or the General Assembly. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, should not and must not be seen as being insensitive to African problems and crises. It cannot afford to allow such a perception to germinate.

Africa is worried that our crises are receiving less and less attention from an international community which is devoting more and more attention elsewhere. In the process, whole countries in Africa have been allowed to disappear. For example, Somalia is no longer around today as a country, otherwise it would have been represented in this Chamber. And yet the international community and all of us Africans, as well as everyone else, are watching.

The Security Council has the capacity to act resolutely and expeditiously in response to crises in Africa. Many countries in Africa are ready to assist. We have the commitment. In southern Africa, for example, SADC forces have re-established peace in Lesotho, and SADC forces and SADC peace initiatives, led by

President Chiluba, have re-established the peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are waiting for the Security Council to commit the necessary troops to keep the peace in that country. But time is of the essence; the peace there is fragile. If we wait too long, we cannot be too sure of what is going to happen next.

My own country is keen to be more involved in peacekeeping operations. We are ready to provide troops in the service of peace. We have participated in the African Crisis Response Initiative, sponsored by the United States Government, precisely because we want to be able to respond to humanitarian crises and peacekeeping challenges in a timely manner. We have also indicated to the Secretariat our readiness to enter into the Standby Arrangement System. At the same time, we are the first to realize that our intention to participate in peacekeeping operations cannot be achieved without financial assistance and logistical support. We will continue to rely on outside help for this. We have no alternative. We have no choice. The United Nations and OAU trust funds established to improve preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa must be properly resourced. The Security Council can also play an important role in preventive diplomacy or conflict prevention. A clear and unequivocal message, and indeed action early on in a dispute or crisis, can make all the difference.

After so many years of dictatorship, my country is now a democracy where all human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected and promoted. Within the constraints of our resources and financial assistance from developing partners, we are trying our best to build and strengthen our democratic institutions. Unfortunately, it is not an easy task. The international climate has not been favourable, particularly to small countries like mine. Poverty and underdevelopment are a source of immense hardship to our people. We give this example only to buttress the point that the democracies that are spawning will remain fragile if the international community does not assist them to overcome their economic and financial problems. We ourselves have obeyed and followed ever so religiously all prescriptions by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but we are still as poor and backward as we were.

The biggest challenge for the international community will be to build a durable peace and promote economic growth in Africa. Such a challenge can be met only by moving beyond our own national or vital interests. The African people need meaningful assistance, assistance that is people-centred. The Secretary-General was quite right in

pointing out that it is in deeds rather than in declarations that the international community's commitment to Africa will be measured. This is a challenge that we must all live up to. That is why I was so delighted to hear the revolutionary speech made earlier this morning by the United Kingdom, and indeed by the solidarity expressed in all the speeches that I have heard here today. It is my prayer that Africa will now receive renewed attention and action.

It is my hope that when all the pieces are put together, when the principal organs have concretized their responses to the Secretary-General's report, this will lead to Africa and its people enjoying enduring peace and prosperity.

There have been references to the question of the control of small arms in Africa. We believe that that issue should not be a major problem at all, because we all know the sources of those small arms.

If those who produce small arms have the will to help Africa, they will be able to do so. There is no point in asking us in Africa to take action against small arms when they keep being pumped into Africa every day. We have seen how, because of reasons beyond our control, our resources in Africa — resources in battle-ridden countries — are being utilized. The whole world looks away in order to allow unscrupulous businessmen to trade minerals for arms in order for us to be able to continue to fight each other. The countries of the West — the developed countries — have a moral responsibility to ensure that there is stricter control over arms flowing into Africa.

AIDS is eating away at the whole of Africa. We believe that in this respect, too, Africans are working hard, encouraging people on the continent to change their attitudes. However, for those already afflicted by the disease, only cheaper medication available to a large majority of people would help ease the problem. As of now, most of the drugs used to treat AIDS are not affordable for the majority of Africans, and this will therefore continue to pose a major problem.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Malawi for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister for International Development and Human Rights of Norway, Her Excellency Ms. Hilde Johnson. I invite her

to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Johnson (Norway): Norway remains firmly committed to peace and development in Africa. The Norwegian Government therefore welcomes the initiative to hold this open meeting of the Security Council. It gives us an opportunity to discuss the vital situation in Africa and to take stock of developments that have taken place since the Secretary-General last year issued his very substantive report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

It is difficult to describe the situation on the African continent as a whole without generalizing too much. Still, it would be fair to say that the situation is characterized by two major trends. On the one hand, we see old conflicts re-erupting and new ones breaking out in more than a dozen African countries. In this respect, the situation has deteriorated. At the same time, however, we are also witnessing a continued democratization process, with the transfer of power from military to civilian rule, free and fair elections and continued economic and political liberalization. In the economic field, macroeconomic development in many countries is proceeding in the right direction, and we have noted that during the 1990s annual economic growth has actually increased in many countries.

We must consolidate and carry forward the gains made so far. We must break the vicious cycles of violent conflict and underdevelopment which are still evident in far too many African countries. We fully concur with the Secretary-General that the mobilization of political will is a key factor if we are to achieve this — political will on the part of both the international community and the African nations themselves. In this respect, the discussion on conflict resolution and peacekeeping at the most recent Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Algiers was very important. The representative of Nigeria reminded us during the general debate here at the United Nations that the OAU members agreed at the summit to uphold codes of decency, ethics and minimum standards of decorum among African Governments and their leadership. And, as President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa put it, the maintenance of democracy requires that

"in every democratic country the ordinary people should feel that they actually do enjoy the right to determine their destiny". (A/54/PV.4)

We welcome these forceful demonstrations of regional leadership in conflict management, and we look forward to

continuing our fruitful cooperation with our African partners to increase capacity for peacekeeping and confidence-building. One example of this cooperation is the Training for Peace programme, which is financed by Norway. Since 1995 more than 300 civilian police officers and military officers have participated in courses held in 11 Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. In addition, several seminars have been arranged in South Africa with close to 300 participants from the whole of the SADC region.

Initiatives to stop the unlawful use and excessive accumulation of small arms are crucial in a discussion of peace and stability in Africa. In some countries, support is needed to restructure the national security sector and to train personnel. Efforts to collect and destroy small arms after conflicts also merit our support. The moratorium on small arms for several West African countries was very encouraging in this respect. We join the Secretary-General in urging all African countries to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Landmines constitute another serious obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. We urge all countries Members of the United Nations to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention. Likewise, we emphasize the need for adequate resources for mine-clearing activities. Norway has already stated its intention to contribute \$120 million over five years to this task.

Let me quote from the Norwegian Prime Minister's address to the General Assembly on 20 September this year:

"Norway remains firmly committed to peace and development in Africa. We will work with our African partners for conflict management and development cooperation. We will work with the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, subregional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and others, to achieve our common aims". (A/54/PV.5)

"Common aims" means developing norms, rules and institutions for dealing with conflicts of interest without resorting to weapons. It is essential to strengthen systems of governance that are participatory, transparent and accountable in countries subject to conflict. Internal war typically evolves from wide or growing disparities in political participation and the distribution of economic

assets. Building formats of governance that promote tolerance, negotiation and compromise may therefore be the best tool we have for preventing a resurgence of violence in fragile societies that are in transition from civil strife to peace. This should be part and parcel of every post-conflict and development effort.

There can be no development without peace, and no peace without development. In this sense, poverty reduction represents the most urgent challenge in Africa. It is crucial in terms of economic development, political stability and regional and global security. It is also in itself a realization of some of the most fundamental human rights in the social and economic area, and they are as important as the political and civil ones. If we are to succeed in this endeavour, we believe that the following factors must be emphasized. First, the international trend of reduced disbursements of development assistance must be reversed. Secondly, more resources must be channelled to the social sectors, specifically to education and health. And thirdly, the focus should be on the poorer segments of the population — on poverty eradication in the right sense of the word.

Norway has been well above the United Nations target for official development assistance for the past two decades. About 50 per cent of our assistance is targeted for Africa. We intend to increase our development assistance further, to up to 1 per cent of our gross national product. Special emphasis will be put on increased cooperation with our African partners, poverty alleviation, improved delivery of social services and debt reduction.

The United Nations will continue to play a central role in all the challenges I have touched upon here. The challenges facing Africa are part of a larger picture of global challenges that require global solutions. In the modern world there is no alternative to strengthening multilateralism. The United Nations is the only truly global forum where overarching common visions can be achieved. It is unique and indispensable. Let us therefore support the United Nations, make it more efficient and consolidate it as the focal point of our efforts to improve our common future.

Again, Norway remains firmly committed to peace and development on the continent of Africa. This past year we have seen how efforts to build peace and a better life for women, children and men in many parts of the continent have been frustrated by fighting and unrest. But this must not make us falter in our efforts to build a strong and sustainable peace and a society that gives people a chance to live a decent life. With political will, economic resources and strong partnerships we have the necessary tools. It is up to us to use them. Together, we can make a difference.

The President: I thank the Minister for International Development and Human Rights of Norway for the kind words she addressed to me.

The meeting was suspended at 6.20 p.m.